CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1065
22 February 1991

Original: ENGLISH

Thirty-first session

PROGRESS REPORT TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT ON THE THIRTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE AD HOC GROUP OF SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS TO CONSIDER INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE MEASURES TO DETECT AND IDENTIFY SEISMIC EVENTS

1. The Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, initially established in pursuance of the decision taken by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament on 22 July 1976, held its thirty-first formal session from 11 to 21 February 1991, in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Ola Dahlman of Sweden. This was the twenty-third session of the Group convened under its new mandate by the decision of the Committee on Disarmament at its 48th meeting on 7 August 1979.

2. The Ad Hoc Group continues to be open to all member States of the Conference on Disarmament, as well as upon request to non-member States. Accordingly, scientific experts and representatives of the following member States of the Conference on Disarmament participated in the session: Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Egypt, Germany, Hungary, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

3. At their request and on the basis of previous invitations by the Conference on Disarmament, scientific experts and representatives from the following non-member States of the Conference on Disarmament participated in the session: Austria, Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, Norway, Spain and Switzerland.

4. Two representatives of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) also attended the session.

5. Under the current mandate of the Ad Hoc Group, information on national investigations related to the work of the Group has been presented by experts

from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, Kenya, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

6. The Ad Hoc Group reviewed the results of experimental activities in preparation for the main part of its Second Technical Test (GSETT-2). The Group noted that the data communication experiment carried out in October/November 1990 turned out to be useful in helping sort out practical communications problems. The Group noted further that 24 countries participated in a trial test during 26 November-2 December, which was undertaken as part of a gradual build-up to the envisaged full-scale testing of the system. For the test period, National Data Centers (NDCs) were operated in each of the 24 participating countries; 4 experimental International Data Centers (EIDCs) were operated; and modern international communications links were utilized. Compared to previous tests considerable improvements were achieved in the functioning of all parts of the system.

7. In reviewing the results of the trial test, the Ad Hoc Group noted that the instructions contained in its Conference Room Paper 190 had worked very well, and that only a few details needed to be modified in preparation for the full-scale experiment. The Group agreed on the necessary modifications, and also collected final updates to its Sourcebook (Conference Room Paper 167). The Ad Hoc Group now considers that the basic preparations have been made at most of the NDCs and all of the EIDCs to conduct the full-scale experiment. However, it is essential to improve the direct inter-computer satellite links between the EIDCs in Moscow and Washington, D.C. Also, for a few of the NDCs, some additional preparations will need to be made.

8. The Ad Hoc Group has stressed to the Conference on Disarmament the importance of broadening the level of participation in GSETT-2 in order to meet the objectives of the large-scale test (e.g. in CD/1032). Thus far, 28 countries have indicated their intentions to establish National Data Centers and to participate in the upcoming main phase of GSETT-2. This participation is essential for the full-scale experiment. Several additional countries have expressed an intent to participate in GSETT-2 if the necessary arrangements can be completed prior to the planned date for starting the main phase. Such participation will improve the results of the experiment and is strongly encouraged. The Group expressed its appreciation for the efforts of Finland and Austria in supporting the participation of Zambia and Peru. The Group regretted the limited participation in the experiment, particularly by countries in South America and Africa. However, the Group considers that the beginning of the main phase of GSETT-2 should not be delayed.

9. The Ad Hoc Group decided that the full-scale experiment would be conducted from 22 April to 9 June 1991. This will comprise 42 consecutive data days, from 22 April to 2 June and 7 additional days for the completion of the Final Event Bulletins by the EIDCs.

10. The Ad Hoc Group discussed with the WMO representatives the preparations that would need to be made for those countries which would be using the WMO/Global Telecommunications System (GTS) during the full-scale experiment. The Group took note of some technical problems that needed to be resolved.

11. The Ad Hoc Group conducted discussions on evaluation criteria for GSETT-2, based upon material presented by a specially appointed study group. The Ad Hoc Group considers the evaluation aspect to be very important, and that pertinent information has to be collected systematically during the test. Accordingly, the Ad Hoc Group agreed that all participants should compile information according to agreed guidelines, and submit this information to the evaluation group, no later than 22 June 1991.

12. The Ad Hoc Group also discussed plans for evaluating and reporting the results of GSETT-2. The Group envisages submitting a preliminary report on the results of GSETT-2 to the Conference on Disarmament during its next session.

The Group further envisages submitting a report on a comprehensive evaluation of the results of the test. The Group will make all effort to complete this report during the spring session of 1992, and if this cannot be achieved, no later than the end of 1992. In this regard, the Group believes it will be important for facilities to remain available to the extent required during 1992 in order to take part in tests that may be required for a successful evaluation of GSETT-2. The Group will again consider this issue at its next session.

13. The Ad Hoc Group conducted a preliminary discussion on the work of the Group remaining under its current mandate and future plans. The Group expressed the view that much valuable work could be conducted in this context. The Group expects to be able to develop specific suggestions in this regard also taking into account the progress in the evaluation of GSETT-2.

14. The Ad Hoc Group suggests that, on the understanding that there are no financial implications to the Conference on Disarmament, the International Maritime Satellite Organization (INMARSAT) be invited to attend the next session of the Group to discuss possibilities for the use of INMARSAT in the development of the communications aspect of a future global seismic data exchange system.

15. The Ad Hoc Group suggests that its next session, subject to approval by the Conference on Disarmament, should be convened from 29 July to 9 August 1991.